United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ As Security Council ends two-day debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina, representative of Yugoslav Federal Republic (Serbia and Montenegro) says discussion was staged "to comdemn only one side"; representative of Denmark warns that if Serb position is unchanged on Monday, 26 April, stronger sanctions will take immediate effect.

+ General Assembly approves joint United Nations/OAS civilian Mission to Haiti to verify that country's human rights record; allocates $19.1 million for its cost.

+ Bulgarian UNTAC soldier killed and five others injured in attack on village of New Oral; in two separate incidents, United Nations Observers and Civilian Police Monitors attacked by National Army of Democratic Kampuchea, according to UNTAC spokesman.

+ All is "on schedule" for referendum in Eritrea this weekend, according to Samir Sanbar, Secretary-General's Special Representative for Eritrea.

+ Secretary-General, in address to High-Level Panel on African Development in Rome, asks for concrete advice to tackle themes of key importance to Africa without adding new bureaucracies.

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Dragomir Djokic, the Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to the United Nations, told the Security Council this afternoon that members of the Council had staged a debate whose sole aim was "apparently to condemn only one side". He addressed the Council as it concluded its discussion of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which began yesterday.

Resolution 820 (1993) continued to "arbitrarily condemn" the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for its alleged involvement in the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Djokic pointed out, although it was evident that his country could not be held responsible either for the outbreak or the continuation of

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the bloodshed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was an ethnic, religious and civil war, he said, in which the three nations making up the Republic -- Serbs, Croats and Muslims - were all taking part. That was exemplified by the fierce fighting between the Croats and the Muslim forces despite their agreement on military cooperation and joint military activities, he said.

The Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations, Bent Haakonsen, warned that if the Serb position was unchanged on Monday, 26 April, the full weight of the stronger sanctions would immediately be felt. The European Community, of which Denmark currently holds the Presidency, had already made preparations for the sanctions to be fully implemented "for as long as it takes for decision-makers in Serbia and for the Bosnian Serbs to come to their senses".

Mr. Hakonsen said the twelve EC Members had repeatedly stated that a negotiated settlement was the only solution to the Yugsolav crisis. "The time for full commitment to the Vance/Owen peace plan is now", Mr. Hakonsen said. Denmark, as well as other European countries, had committed troops and millions of dollars in humanitarian assistance to the suffering population in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Slavi Pashovski (Bulgaria) said the Council's decision to tighten sanctions if the Bosnian Serbs did not sign the peace plan, when put into effect, would almost totally cut Bulgaria's transportation links with the rest of Europe. A mechanism should be created to assist the States most affected by those sanctions in overcoming their hardships.

Echoing that statement, Victor H. Batiouk (Ukraine) said that, as a result of the sanctions, one of the major shipping companies of the Ukraine, with assets of $2 billion, was on the verge of economic collapse.

Addressing the Council yesterday, the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mohamed Sacirbey, said the international community was legally obligated to take steps to halt the genocide and aggression taking place in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The current mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia was neither adequate nor appropriate, he went on. Band-aids were an appropriate temporary response to some wounds to stop the bleeding, but became irrelevant when new and ever more vicious wounds were being inflicted.

The two-day debate follows the Council's decisions over the weekend to declare Srebrenica a safe area and to strengthen sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia if the Bosnian Serbs do not sign the peace plan and end hostilities. The debate was initially requested last Thursday by the Non-Aligned Caucus in the Council -- Cape Verde, Djibouti, Morocco, Pakistan and Venezuela.

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The General Assembly this morning decided that the United Nations will participate in an international Civilian Mission to Haiti, jointly with the

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Organization of American States (OAS). The mission will verify Haiti's compliance with its international human rights obligations. The Assembly also allocated $19.1 million dollars in expenditure for the Mission.

In adopting the resolution without a vote, the Assembly authorized the deployment and asked the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps to expedite and strengthen the United Nations presence in Haiti. It also called for the early return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to resume his constitutional functions.

In a statement to the Assembly, the representative of Haiti said the coup d'état in September 1991 had resulted in over 3,000 people being massacred and had created more than 50,000 refugees. Haitians, today, could be beaten, violated and killed at the whim of those in power. State coffers were being systematically plundered and ports and airports used to facilitate drug trafficking. In fact, only crime prospered in the country, he said.

Member States taking part in the discussion, while supporting the deployment of the Civilian Mission to Haiti, said the situation there remained grave due to the lack of cooperation by the de facto regime. If the situation did not improve, speakers warned, stronger measures to resolve the Haitian crisis, such as a blockade to enforce the economic sanctions against Haiti, could be considered.

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A Bulgarian soldier serving with the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was killed yesterday and five others injured in an attack on the UNTAC District Headquarters in the village of New Oral, a spokesman for UNTAC said today. The 24-year old Vencislav Angelov Mirchev died instantly as a result of the explosion of an anti-tank grenade.

During the attack, the UNTAC District Headquarters was fired at and the building was then ransacked and looted. Two UNTAC prefabricated buildings were also sprayed with bullets, said the spokesman.

Two other incidents took place yesterday, according to the spokesman. At one incident, a joint patrol of five Civilian Police Monitors and three United Nations Military Observers travelling in two vehicles came under fire from a group believed to be the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK), while they were talking to local people.

Later yesterday, two United Nations Military Observers and their interpreter were ambushed by four armed NADK soldiers who forced them out of their vehicle at gunpoint. The NADK then fired some shots in the ground in front of the group before taking possession of their car and driving away, the spokesman said.

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All is "on schedule and on track" for the referendum to take place in Eritrea from 23 to 25 April, according to Samir Sanbar, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Eritrea.

In addition to a core of 21 observers already in Eritrea, one hundred observers -- from 35 different countries -- had arrived in the country and the United Nations Observer Mission to verify the Referendum in Eritrea (UNOVER) was preparing the final phase prior to the referendum. Briefings had been conducted for observers, who had been assigned to the different regions.

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For over 30 years, aid and assistance had "poured into Africa with seemingly little effect", Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told a panel of High-Level personalities on African Development in Rome over the weekend. The panel, which is the Secretary-General's think-tank on African development, held a two-day meeting at the World Food Programme (WFP) headquarters in the Italian capital.

Donors had lost optimism because many recipients had become trapped in "a damaging cycle of dependence", the Secretary-General said. The whole notion of development was "wasteful, paternalistic and lacking dynamism" and more visible results must be achieved rapidly. He asked the panel for concrete advice to tackle the themes of key importance to Africa without adding new bureaucracies. He also called on the international community to "move away from approaches which have been tried and failed".

The Panel, which was established last December, meets twice a year to assist and advice the Secretary-General on issues of Africa's economic and social development.

The Government of Japan will host an International Conference on African Development in Tokyo in October, which will be attended by ministers from Africa and representatives from major donor countries.

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